

FIRST ANNUAL REPORT

MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS

June 1, 1916 to May 31, 1917



OFFICE
204 EAST LEXINGTON STREET
BALTIMORE, MD.

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JUNE 1st, 1916 TO MAY 31st, 1917

CHARLES E. HARPER
Chairman

WILLIAM F. STONE
Vice-Chairman and Treasurer

M. E. HARRISON
Secretary

MARIE W. PRESSTMAN
Clerk

OFFICE
204 EAST LEXINGTON STREET
BALTIMORE, MD.

Baltimore, Maryland, November 1, 1917.

To his Excellency

Emerson C. Harrington

Governor of Maryland

Sir:

I beg herewith to submit the report of the Maryland State Board of Motion Picture Censors, of which I have the honor to be Chairman, for the current year. The report explains in detail the work done by the Board under the law creating it, passed by the General Assembly at the Session of 1916.

The members of the Board have endeavored to perform their duty of preventing the exhibition of films harmful from a moral standpoint, in such a manner as to interfere as little as possible with the legitimate operations of the vast interests concerned. Your Board has made every effort to foster the real educational and artistic ventures of the motion picture producers, while all that is lewd, vulgar and immoral has been discouraged and, so far as possible, prohibited. We believe our work in this regard has met the approval of the best elements of the people.

The amount allowed the Board for expenses, which are paid out of fees earned by us, was just about sufficient during the first year. The higher cost of operating, as well as the increase in the volume of work, makes it desirable, in our judgement, that the expense allowance be increased. Such an increase, while assuring successful and unrestricted continuance of supervision over films, will not cost the State any money, the report showing that balance of more than \$8,000 was turned over to the State Treasurer by us at the expiration of the first year, after all expenses had been paid.

The Secretary's report, which is herewith published, includes an itemized report of all the receipts and expenditures, and results of all examinations of films.

Respectfully submitted,

CHARLES E. HARPER

Chairman.

SECRETARY'S REPORT

The report of the first year's work of the Maryland State Board of Motiod Picture Censors shows that during the period from June 1, 1916 to May 31, 1917 the total number of reels submitted for examination was 10,739 originals and 422 duplicates, comprising 4,769 subjects. The office receipts were \$22,016.25, of which \$8,050 was turned over to the State and \$593.39 carried over to the next year. The running expenses of the office were \$11,913.99, the sum of \$1,458.87 spent on permanent equipment being an expense that will not occur again. Therefore the actual earnings of the Board over and above the running expenses approximated \$10,000 in spite of the fact that the report does not actually cover a normal year's work.

The law creating the Board became effective on June 1, 1916, but it was found necessary in Maryland as in other states, to give the motion picture exchanges and exhibitors several weeks' grace to call in their films for examination. The actual physical examination of reels began on June 19 and the law was enforced with regard to all reels released on and after June 26.

Immediately after the law became effective representations were made to the Board by leading producers and exchange men, that their bookings which had been made many months in advance would be seriously interfered with if the law were enforced with regard to films already in circulation. They asked that censorship of reels released prior to June 26 be postponed for a year. The Board upon inquiry found that some such procedure had been followed in all states where censorship was already in force, and after some deliberation, granted the film companies and exchanges a delay of a little more than six months, or until January 1, 1917.

Therefore the number of reels examined by the Board between June 26, 1916 and January 1, 1917 does not represent the average work of the Board for a corresponding period after the law went into full operation, and the receipts of the board do not represent the normal income for twelve months.

An analysis of the financial report, which follows, shows that the average monthly receipts during the period from June 26, 1916 to January 1, 1917 were approximately \$1,466.72, while from January 1, 1917 to May 31, 1917 the receipts average \$2,326.60 per month. The total number of reels examined during the first named period average approximately 738 $\frac{5}{7}$ per month as compared with 1,194 $\frac{4}{5}$ per month during the second period. Receipts from fines were relatively small during the first six months owing to the fact that old releases were not subject to censorship. The amount spent for office equipment by the Board included the purchase of a projection machine, a fire proof booth, screen, rewinder and other technical equipment in addition to the construction of a dark room for projection. The office force employed by the Board is exceedingly small when the volume of work handled is considered. It consists of a clerk, an operator for the machine, and an office boy. The system adopted by the Board for the examination of reels is simple but thoroughly adequate. Application blanks are furnished to all those who apply for examination of films. These must be filled out in detail and signed by an authorized agent of the owner or lessor. Upon completion of the examination the applicant is given an order of approval, rejection, or an approval order subject to certain eliminations. He receives this order in duplicate, and two identical orders are cross-filed in the office under title of film, and name of manufacturer respectively. When a picture is approved the seal is immediately attached. Films ordered eliminated, unless the eliminations are trivial in character, receive no approval seal until they have been re-submitted in eliminated form. Sometimes even then the eliminations are not entirely satisfactory, and the same film may be looked at three or even four times. Owing to the fact that no charge is made for this service the record of such re-examinations does not appear in the detailed report of reels examined, but it constitutes an important part of the work of the Board.

Films rejected by the Board may be appealed and reviewed before at least two members of the Board. A number of appeals have been considered and a number of reconstructed films submitted. These are also not listed for the same reason as the re-examinations of eliminated

films. The Board's decisions on all films have been accepted in every case, and no appeals from its rulings have been taken to the Courts. The Board believes that eliminations ordered have been conscientiously carried out in the majority of cases by the film companies and their agents. The practice of returning eliminated films to the office has assured the showing of first run films throughout the state in conformity with the requirements of the Board. The chief difficulty in securing the enforcement of the law, with regard to other than first run pictures, arises from the fact that for the purpose of film distribution Maryland is part of a territory comprising Delaware, the District of Columbia and Virginia, where there is no censorship. The main offices of the film companies are, as a rule, in Washington, where the eliminated parts are reinserted for showing in other states. The films are shipped to Maryland exhibitors from Washington, and frequently the eliminated parts are left in through inadvertence. As it is obviously impossible to compel the film companies to supply separate prints for Maryland these violations are bound to occur occasionally. Whenever they are detected they are prosecuted to the full extent of the law.

In endeavoring to carry out the intent of the law, the Board has usually received the hearty support of the better film producers and exchange managers, who are not only endeavoring to conform to the requirements of the law with regard to eliminations, but to produce films which will meet the demands of censorship. In the past year the number of clean films has greatly augmented, their educational value is noticeably higher, and the range of subjects has widened considerably. A number of films now being produced exclusively for children are beginning to fill a long felt want.

STATEMENT OF OPERATIONS
for the period June 1, 1916 to May 31, 1917

RECEIPTS

Fees—Original Reels 10,739 @ \$2.00.....	\$21,478.00	
Duplicate “ 422 @ 1.00.....	422.00	
Sale of Substitute Seals.....	65.25	
Loans	1,300.00	
Receipts from fines.....	50.00	
Total Receipts		\$23,316.25

DISBURSEMENTS

Salaries—Members of Board.....	\$ 7,200.00	
Office and Operator, etc.	2,207.60	
Rent	500.00	
Excess Insurance Premiums,		
Alterations and Repairs	220.00	
Repairs to Building	717.61	
Receipts of Fees remitted to State		
Comptroller.....	8,000.00	
Fines remitted to State Comptroller.....	50.00	
Film Seals	950.63	
Office Furniture and Fixtures.....	283.41	
Loans repaid.....	1,300.00	
Light, Heat and Power.....	311.65	
Stationery and Office Supplies	252.38	
Picture Machine and Expense.....	445.95	
Traveling Expense	35.90	
Telephone	86.63	
Premiums on Bonds... ..	47.50	
Sundries	113.60	
Total Disbursements		22,722.86
Excess of Receipts over Disbursements		\$ 593.39

Maryland State Board of Moving Picture Censors
204 E. Lexington Street, Baltimore, Md.

Gentlemen:—

In conformity with your instructions, we report we have made an audit of the cash transactions of your Board from June 1, 1916 to May 31, 1917, and have found same to be correct.

Respectfully submitted,

WILLIAM A. GILLESPIE
Deputy State Auditor

Statement of Amount of Fees collected for Examinations of Reels, Original and Duplicate

June 1, 1916 to May 31, 1917

Date	No. Reels Original @ \$2.00	No. Reels Duplicate @ \$1.00	Fees for Examination	Total Fees
1916				
June	200	16	\$ 416	
July	668	52	1388	
August	781	31	1593	
Sept.	775	28	1578	
Oct.	855	27	1737	
Nov.	734	26	1494	
Dec.	1017	27	2061	
1917				
Jan.	1619	31	3269	
Feb.	1119	36	2274	
March	1059	34	2152	
April	910	69	1889	
May	1002	45	2049	
Totals	10739	422		\$21,900.00

Amount collected from sale of substitute seals for Period
ending May 31, 1917

\$ 66 25

Results of all Examinations of Films Made by Maryland State Board of Censors
June 1, 1916 to May 31, 1917

Date	No. Subjects Examined	No. Reels Examined Original	No. Reels Examined Duplicate	No. Subjects Approved	No. Subjects Rejected	No. Subjects Eliminated
1916						
June	96	193	16	90		6
July	370	675	52	344	1	25
August	397	781	31	345	1	51
Sept.	380	766	28	304	2	74
Oct.	387	835	27	309	1	77
Nov.	342	750	22	282	1	59
Dec.	414	964	31	334	1	79
1917						
Jan.	642	1608	25	551	4	87
Feb.	469	1146	41	401	4	64
March	462	1078	35	412	1	49
April	384	913	69	349	1	34
May	423	1014	45	367	2	54
Totals	4766	10723	422	4088	19	659

**RULES ADOPTED BY THE
MARYLAND STATE BOARD OF MOTION PICTURE CENSORS
IN PURSUANCE OF SECTION 16 of the Acts 1916, Ch. 209**

- 1—All persons desiring to submit films or views to the Board for examination must fill out the application blanks provided by the Board, giving title, date of release, number of reels, number of feet, whether original or duplicate, character of film, whether comedy, drama, news etc. and name of manufacturer. Applications must be signed by an authorized agent or representative of the owner or lessor of the film or views to be examined.
- 2—Applications must be accompanied by check or cash covering full amount of censorship fee, and no films or views will be examined unless paid for in advance.
- 3—All applications for the examination of duplicate prints must be made in the same manner and at the same time as applications for originals. Otherwise they will be treated as originals and the full censorship fee of \$2.00 per reel charged, instead of \$1.00 as provided in the law for duplicates.
- 4—Reels must be delivered to the Board at least two days in advance of release date. Reels will be examined by the Board within 24 hours after they are delivered at the office, whenever possible, and will be returned on the day after they are examined, or on the same day if practicable.
- 5—All reels will be examined by the Board in the order in which they are received. Exception to this rule will be made only when application and fee have been received in advance and a definite appointment has been made for the examination by the exchange manager or agent. News reels and serials will receive immediate attention.
- 6—Substitute seals to replace approval seals lost or destroyed will be supplied to exchange managers, agents and other duly authorized persons if application is made on the form provided for the purpose, giving title and serial number of film for which a new seal is

desired. When the applicant is unable to furnish the serial number of the film for which he wishes an approval seal he must make an affidavit, when required by the Board, that the picture for which he wishes an approval seal is the print examined by the Board, and that all the eliminations have been made as required.

- 7—Re-issues of subjects previously examined by the Board will not be subject to the censorship fee provided that application is made by the original applicant, in the form of an affidavit, duly witnessed and sworn to before a justice of the peace, that the new print is identical with that examined by the Board, and that changes or eliminations made in the first print will be made in the re-issue. The Board reserves the right, whenever advisable, to order such films sent in for re-examination.
- 8—Substitute seals for use in the above cases will be supplied under the conditions specified above at a cost of 25 cents each.
- 9—All films or views must be presented to the Board as originally produced unless otherwise specified on the application. In case the print presented has been subject to eliminations or changes previous to examination, a list of the same must accompany the application and the approval seal will be issued only for the print as presented.
- 10—Title of subject, name of manufacturer, and number of parts, as stated on application must correspond to title, name of manufacturer and number of parts as shown on the screen.
- 11—Any change of title, or any alterations or additions made to any film or view after it has been examined by the Board must be submitted in writing for the approval of the Board, and if the change meets with the Board's approval it will issue a certificate to this effect.
- 12—The Board reserves the right to withhold seals of approval on films in which changes or eliminations have been ordered, pending the making of such changes and eliminations by the exchange manager or agent. If, upon re-examination, the film is found to be satisfactory, the approval seal will be attached. There is no charge for such re-examination or for re-examination on appeal.

**Statement of Prosecutions for Violations of the Acts 1916, Ch. 209
for Period ending May 31, 1917**

Title of Film	Where Exhibited	Nature of Offense	Date	Amount of Fine
Punty	Little Pickwick Baltimore, Md.	Eliminations not made	1917 Jan. 23	\$ 5.00
Dollars and the Woman	Gordon Baltimore, Md.	Not censored	Jan. 29	5.00
Darling of Paris	Picture Garden Baltimore, Md.	No seal	March 13	10.00
Race Suicide	Clover Baltimore, Md.	Eliminations not made	May 19	25.00
Parkway Review	Parkway Baltimore, Md.	No seal	May 28	5.00
Love Dope	Strand Baltimore, Md.	Not censored	May 5	5.00
The Millionaire's Double	Hippodrome Baltimore, Md.	No seal	May 25	1.00